NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

HOLDING ON TO OUR HISTORY

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

WE CARE for Australia's valuable Commonwealth records ❦ Records which trace events and decisions that shaped the nation ❦ Australian stories, big and small. About war, Royal Commissions and Cabinet debates, about building things and doing things ❦ History as it happened. And the people involved. Each with a tale to tell ❦ That's why we look after the precious records of days past ❦ So the stories are told again and again ❦

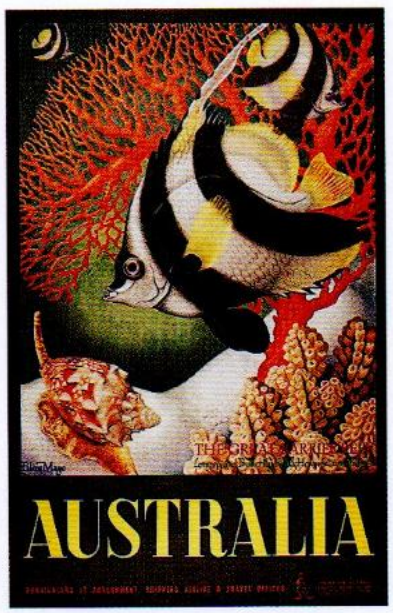
SPEAKER ADDRESSING A POLITICAL GATHERING IN SYDNEY'S DOMAIN IN THE 1950s.
THROUGH ITS VAST COLLECTION COVERING ALMOST EVERY TOPIC AFFECTING THE LIVES OF AUSTRALIANS, THE ARCHIVES DOCUMENTS THE NATION'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Model Of Efficiency

HIGH TECH, orderly and squeaky clean. These modern hallmarks of the National Archives ensure that optimum conditions exist for the preservation and storage of documents and photographs.

The Archives primary role is to keep and care for valuable Commonwealth government records for the benefit of all Australians.

In so doing, we control the transfer, custody and disposal of records and provide free public access to our extensive holdings.



We also promote and publicise our collections through travelling exhibitions and publications.

The Archives head office is located in Canberra with offices in each State capital and in Darwin. We welcome visitors to our reading rooms and can assist you in finding the material you want to see.

The most exhilarating aspect of using Archives material is that you scrutinise the original files complete with letters, notes and decisions as they happened.

FROM THE FILES

A Rationing Commission poster held by the Archives explains how to wash and dry wartime rayon hosiery: 'Wash in plenty of luke-warm suds, squeezing gently through stockings. Don't rub; rinse in clear, luke-warm water and dry in a shady place for 48 hours'.

POLITICS, PAPERS & PEOPLE

GOVERNMENT RECORDS are the lifeblood of the Archives and most records we hold are those which were received, created or kept by the agencies of the Commonwealth government.

Not all government records need to be retained. In fact only about five per cent of all records created by all agencies are kept permanently. Agencies and the Archives appraise the records to gauge their value and determine if, and how long, they need to be kept.

The diversity of government activities since Federation is reflected in the holdings which include records on immigration, foreign affairs, defence and army service, certificates of naturalisation and Commonwealth Royal Commissions held this century. We also look after older records including those about Indigenous people, customs, patents, postal and telegraphic services, shipping and lighthouses.

Personal papers of past Prime Ministers, Ministers of the Parliament and people with strong Commonwealth links are significant records, particularly for historians and political researchers.

While the bulk of records created by the Commonwealth are files, they also include posters, reports, maps, photographs, paintings, films, electronic records and audio and film tapes such as news broadcasts from the ABC.

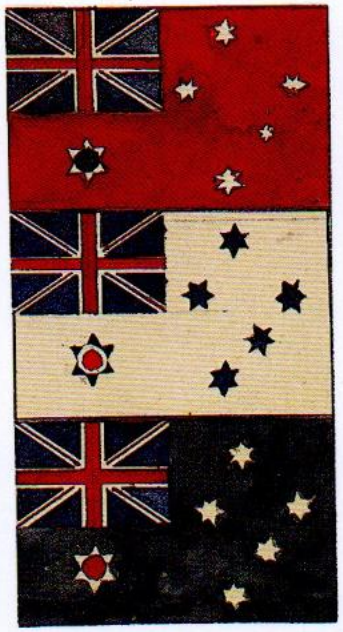
MINDING THE STORE

Acidity is one of the major causes of brittleness and discolouration in paper, shortening its life. The Archives is linked with several companies which develop, manufacture and market archival paper products. The paper is alkaline and will last for centuries.

ON ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND FOR THE 1944 EMPIRE CONFERENCE,
PRIME MINISTER CURTIN SAYS A FEW WORDS TO THE GATHERED MEDIA.
THE ARCHIVES LOOKS AFTER THE PERSONAL RECORDS OF MANY
AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTERS.

All in the Family

CHANCES ARE we have something about your family in our collection. Our army service records, migrants' files, ships' passenger lists and naturalisation certificates often make the Archives first port of call for people interested in tracing their family history.



Chances are we hold material on subjects that interest you. Things like architecture, broadcasting, the railways, theatre, astronomy, meteorology, lighthouses and flag designs. Visitors sometimes unearth rare gems of information as they fossick through the files.

And chances are we can help with your research or studies through Cabinet records and Royal Commission papers, foreign policy and defence documents and records about Indigenous people. Our massive collection holds more than 100 million items!

We also keep more than a million photographs, thousands of maps, plans and drawings and hundreds of kilometres of film. All these records are part of Australia's story, and help define our identity, revealing who we are and where we come from.

FROM THE FILES

The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, aimed at non-Europeans, required Asian residents to obtain a Certificate of domicile, before temporarily leaving Australia. Without it they could be stopped on return, given a dictation test in a European language and refused entry.

TO ATTRACT MIGRANTS, AUSTRALIA PROMOTED ITSELF AS A LAND OF SUN, SEA AND SURF IN THE 1950s.
ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE IS EVIDENT IN THE ARCHIVES HOLDINGS AND PROVIDES CLUES TO AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY AS IT HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE YEARS.

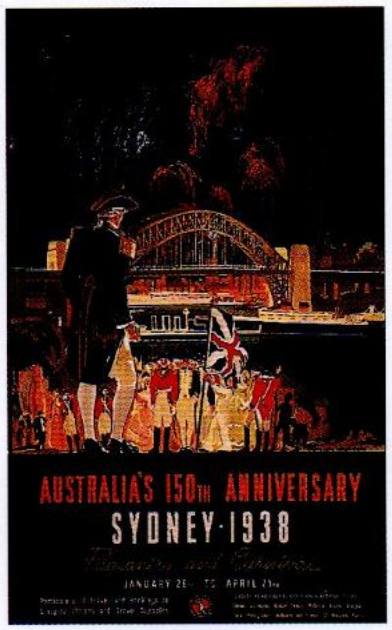
A Peek at the Treasures

WHAT CONSTITUTES an archival treasure largely depends on your passion, but for most researchers, the Archives vast collection is something akin to Tutankhamen's tomb!

Some of the prized items include the personal papers of former Prime Ministers including Billy Hughes, John Curtin, Harold Holt, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, Gough Whitlam and Paul Keating.

The papers relating to the draft Constitution are pure gold too. They include early drafts, hand-written notes and intriguing ephemera relating to travel arrangements for those attending the constitutional conventions.

Our rich copyright collection contains extensive theatrical material from early Australian productions. It showcases the writings of Steele Rudd, Marcus Clarke, Betty Roland, Kate Howarde and Ray Lawler.



The Holtermann photographic collection features rare panoramic views of Australian cities and towns in the late 1800s, some up to three metres long taken with the world's largest camera.

Other jewels include Banjo Paterson's application for a military commission in 1915, the 46 final entries in the the 1912 design competition for Canberra, the original design for the Australian coat of arms, a series of Australian National Travel Association posters from the 1930s and the design entries for new Parliament House.

Come in and find your own nuggets!

MINDING THE STORE

Our photographic collection in Canberra is kept in a temperature controlled store room with 24-hour electronic surveillance. Photographs are stored in acid-free boxes at less than 10 degrees celsius in a room usually opened just once a week, to minimise temperature fluctuations.

PHOTOGRAPH REGISTERED BY ROY RENE TO COPYRIGHT THE
CHARACTER MAKEUP FOR MO.
THE ARCHIVES HAS A LARGE COLLECTION OF THEATRICAL MATERIAL
INCLUDING SCRIPTS, PHOTOS AND THEATRE PROGRAMS.

GETTING STARTED

EACH OF OUR offices has reading rooms where you can undertake your own research. Archives staff can help you locate the information you want using specialised catalogues known as finding aids, which relate to specific collections.

You can also use our electronic database which contains information about all government departments, groups or series of records and millions of individual items.

You will usually be given access to the original records, but sometimes, for security or preservation reasons, copies of documents may be provided.

While access to Archives material is free, a small fee is charged for photocopies. As records are not transferred out of their home office, you can order photocopies from another Archives office and they will be forwarded direct to you.

FROM THE FILES

During his Antarctic Research Expedition of 1929–31, Sir Douglas Mawson claimed territories for Australia. The written proclamation was left under a cairn, retrieved in 1980 and transported in an esky to Canberra, where it is now safe and snug after defrosting and cleaning.

TAKING A BREATHER IN MELBOURNE,
THE CREW OF AN FJ HOLDEN IN THE 1954 REDEX TRIAL
GETS READY FOR THE NEXT STAGE.
SPORT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF
AUSTRALIAN CULTURE AND IS STRONGLY REPRESENTED
IN THE ARCHIVES COLLECTION.

Turning The Big Three O!

On the first working day of January, Commonwealth records created 30 years ago become available for public scrutiny.

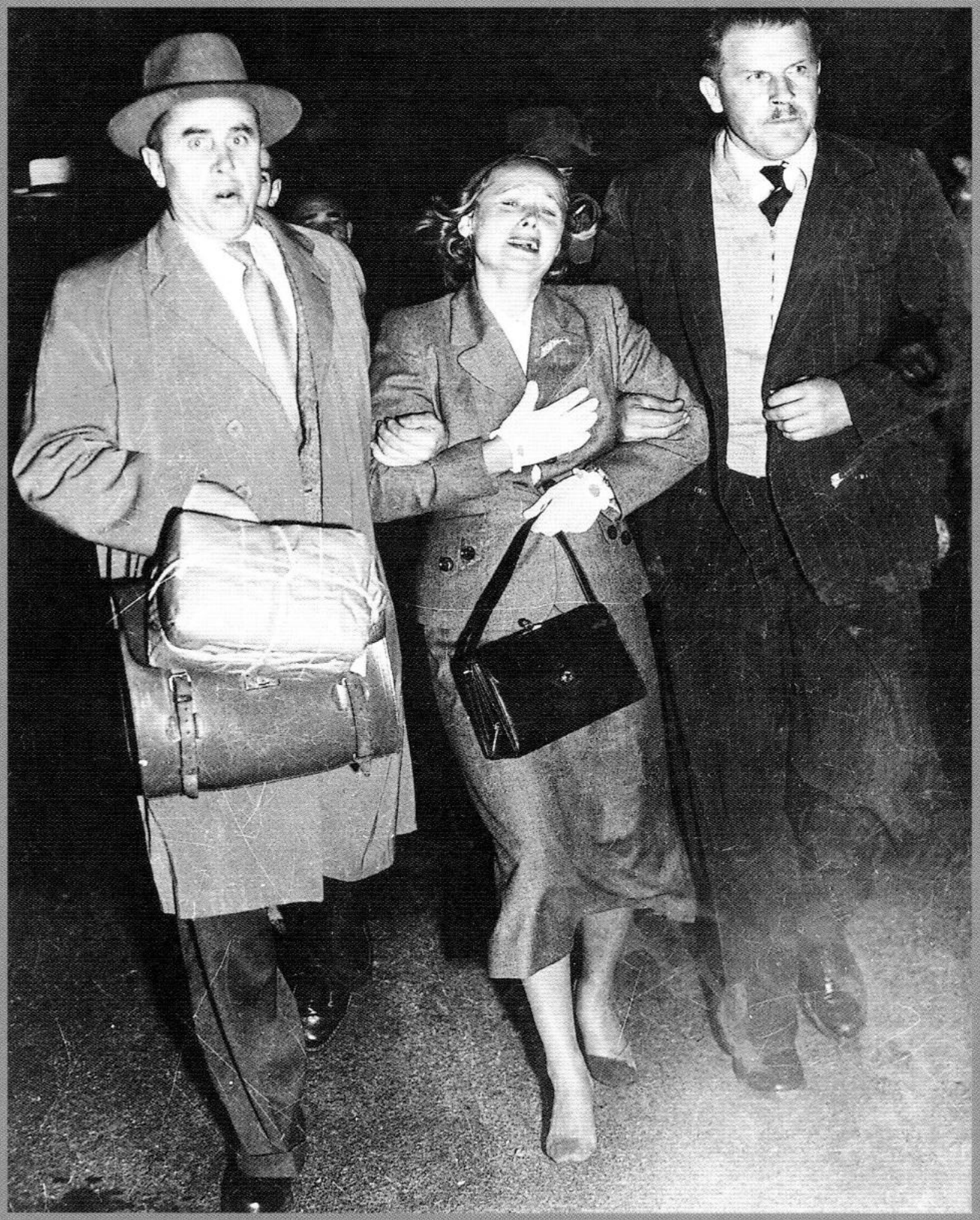
Some years provide dramatic finds, and Cabinet records in particular often change our perception of history and our leaders. For example, the release of the 1956 Cabinet Papers covering the Suez Crisis made headlines like '1956: the Year Suez made a Monkey out of Menzies'.

The 30-year time buffer insulates governments and individuals involved in important and often controversial decisions. It also fulfils our international obligations by preserving essential secrecy for a substantial period.

Even after 30 years, some information can still be highly sensitive, due to privacy, national security, legal or commercial reasons. Intelligence and defence records are prime examples.

Minding The Store

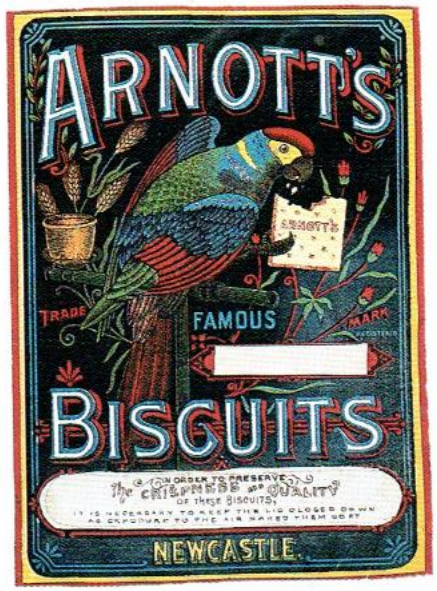
Visitors to the Archives will generally find Queensland material in Queensland and Tasmanian records in Tasmania, but it is not always so. Commonwealth Royal Commission records for example are kept in Canberra. Also in our federal system, records can move around in mysterious ways...



MRS PETROV BEING ESCORTED TO A PLANE AT
MASCOT AIRPORT IN SYDNEY IN 1954.
DETAILS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NOTABLE EVENTS IN
AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY ARE KEPT FOR POSTERITY AT THE ARCHIVES.

TELLING THE STORIES

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES has a strong public focus, and we promote our holdings and services widely. We present exhibitions and publish books to increase awareness of our collection and to draw attention to historic issues and events.



Most of our exhibitions begin their life in our Exhibition Gallery in Canberra. They then tour galleries and museums in other cities and towns. At any one time up to half a dozen Archives exhibitions are likely to be on show somewhere in Australia.

Our books include *Federation: The Guide to Records*, which identifies and locates Federation material held by archives and collecting institutions around Australia, and *Finding Families*, our guide for genealogists. Special guides to particular records in the collection cover such topics as lighthouses, the sinking of *HMAS* Sydney, Indigenous issues and royalty.

We also publish teachers resource books to assist history teachers in making archival information more accessible to their students.

FROM THE FILES

Arnott's rosella is probably the most famous trade mark among thousands in the 66 volumes of Trade Marks Registers (dated 1865 to 1906) held in the Archives in Canberra. Our offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth also keep Trade Marks Registers.

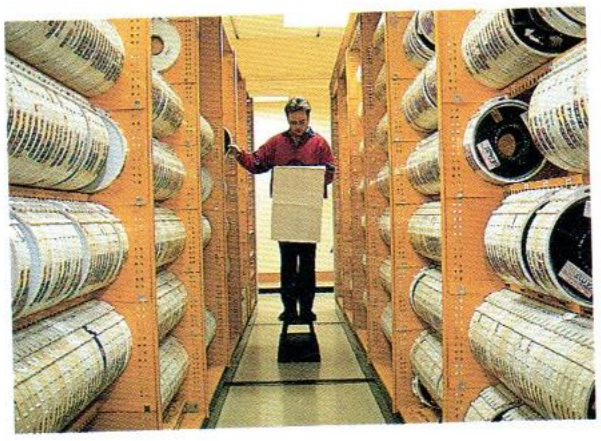
A NORTHERN TERRITORY ABORIGINAL FAMILY POSE FOR THE CAMERA,
SOMETIME IN THE 1930s.
THIS IMAGE IS PART OF THE ARCHIVES **BETWEEN TWO WORLDS** EXHIBITION
WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF THE REMOVAL OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN OF
PART DESCENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

LOOKING AFTER THINGS

PRESERVATION AND storage of records are vital Archives concerns and our first-class conservation laboratories around Australia all use modern methods for preservation and repair work.

The majority of records we keep are 20th-century paper records, with all the attendant problems of acidity, brittleness and mould. We employ a range of measures to retard deterioration and prevent damage to records and also educate staff and the public on how to handle records correctly.

This advice includes informing government departments about creating and handling its day-to-day files which may become tomorrow's archives.



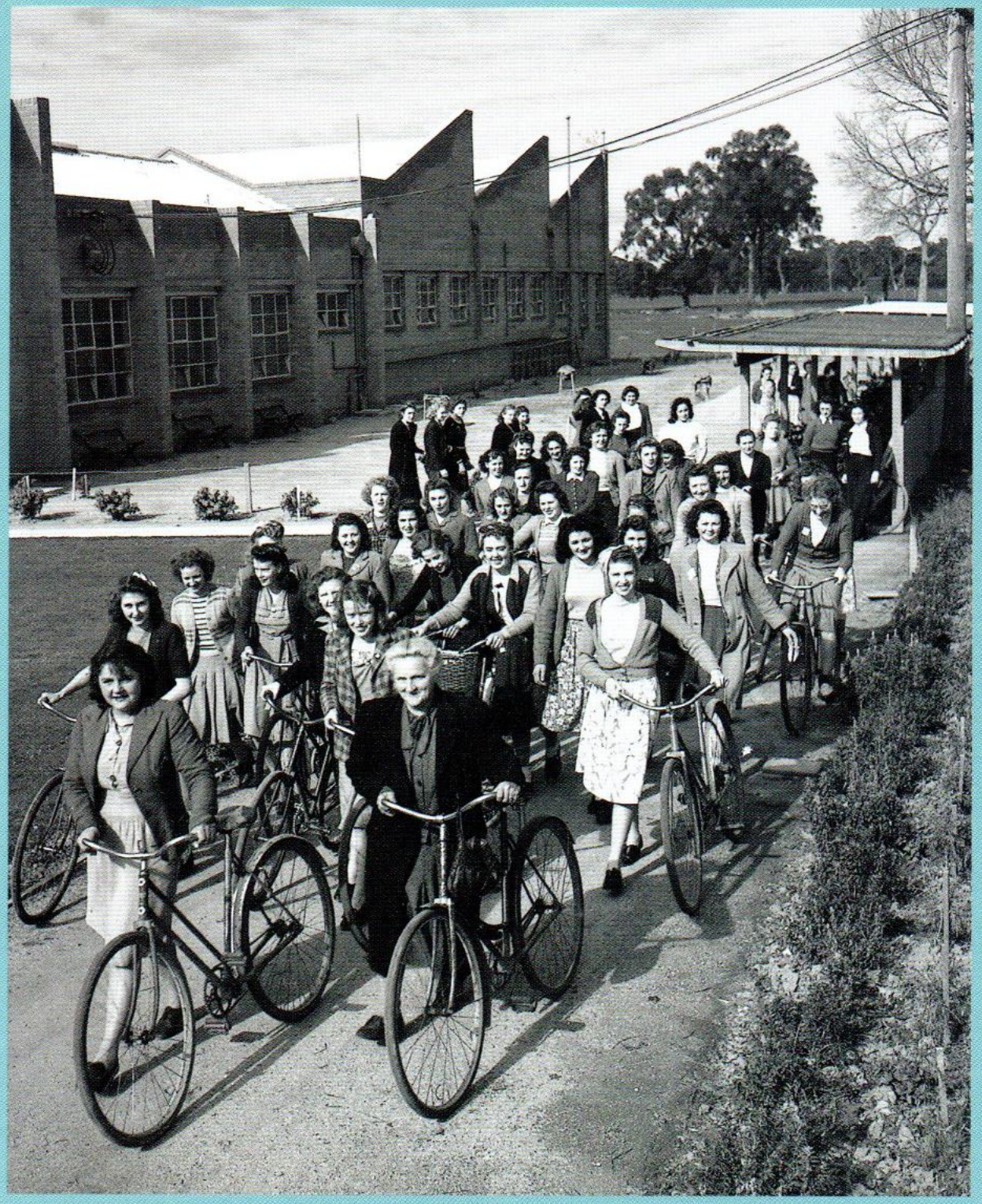
The Archives is also involved in assisting government agencies to manage their electronic records. We help identify the key electronic records of lasting value and determine how long they need to be maintained.

Storing records is closely linked with preservation. Records are maintained at optimum air temperature and humidity levels, and stored in archival quality boxes. The floors are constructed from reinforced concrete to support the heavy weight of shelves full of files and other records.

Highly valued records or those at risk of deterioration are photographed or microfilmed so that you can view copies if the original is unavailable or has significantly degenerated.

MINDING THE STORE

The reference numbers assigned to Archives records are similar to cataloguing numbers used in libraries. One main difference between libraries and archives is that records are linked to the agency that created them, giving users information on their source and context.

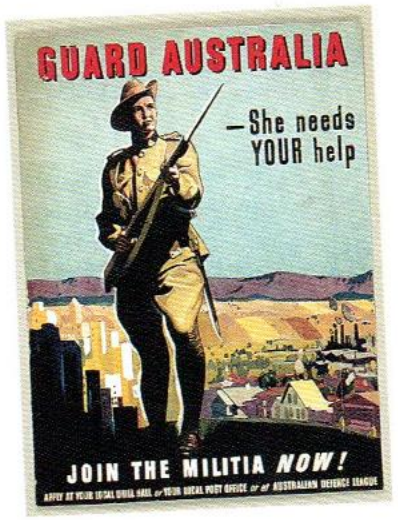


KNOCK-OFF TIME AT THE LATOOF AND CALLIL
CLOTHING FACTORY IN VICTORIA, TAKEN IN 1945.
THIS PHOTO, FROM THE ARCHIVES RECORDS RELATING TO INDUSTRY,
WAS TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
TO HIGHLIGHT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE WAR EFFORT.

Coming Of Age

Although the proposal had been around since Federation, it was Australia's involvement in the two world wars which finally led to the birth of the nation's archives.

As a fledgling nation in the 1920s and 1930s, Australia was not overly concerned with its own history, and records were often retained or destroyed on the whim of those who looked after them.



By 1940, it was realised that the loss of WWI records had been a form of 'administrative lobotomy'. Vital records were gone forever simply because there had been no systematic attempt to safeguard and preserve them.

And so in 1942, Prime Minister John Curtin created the War Archives Committee which produced guidelines for the maintenance and destruction of war records.

After the war, the War Memorial and the National Library shared archival responsibilities. In 1952, the Library was the sole archival authority. Nine years later an independent entity emerged, called the Commonwealth Archives, later Australian Archives, and in 1998, the National Archives of Australia.

The Archives Act of 1983 gives the Archives status and legal powers over the transfer, custody, disposal and accessibility of Commonwealth records.

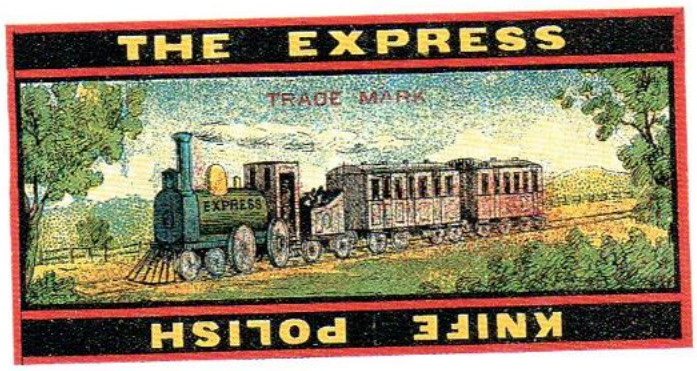
FROM THE FILES

The Archives holds Australia's three page declaration of war on Japan, dated 9 December 1941, in which war is declared in the third last paragraph. We also hold the Instrument of Surrender, signed four years later.

WATCHED BY HER MOTHER AS SHE POSES FOR HER FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPHER FATHER, ADELE MILDENHALL WEARS THE UNIFORM OF ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL.
THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN AROUND 1930 AND IS PART OF THE ARCHIVES MILDENHALL COLLECTION FEATURING MORE THAN 8,000 PHOTOGRAPHS OF EARLY CANBERRA.

BEAM US UP SCOTTY!

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES website (www.naa.gov.au) includes a database of information about our entire collection along with up to date information about our exhibitions, future events, publications and latest news.



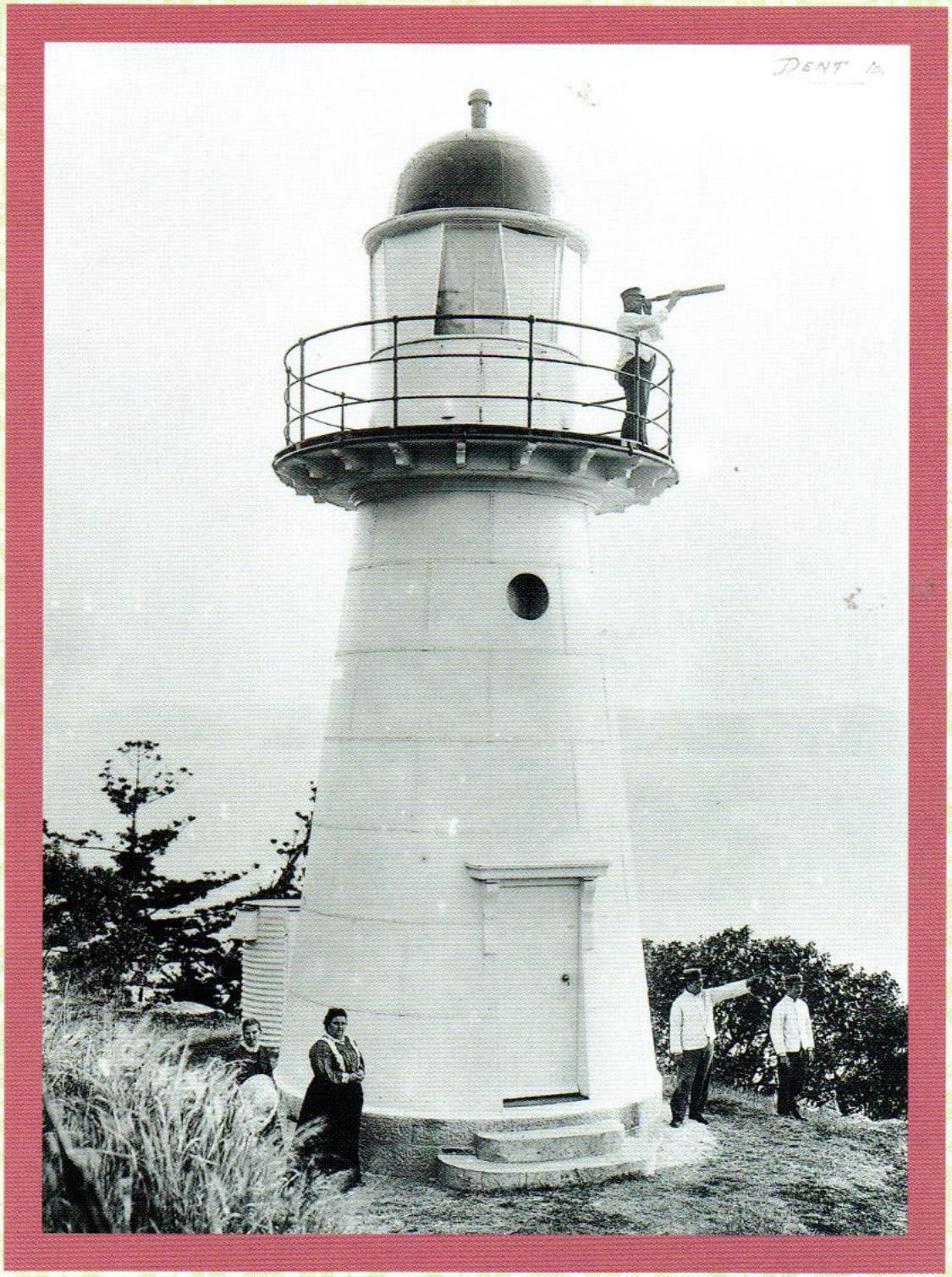
The site contains guidance on how to access Archives material and has links to other Australian State archival institutions, professional associations and a number of overseas archives.

Before visiting the Archives, we suggest you first telephone to confirm that we do, in fact, hold the material in which you are interested. Your call will also assist Archives staff to prepare for your visit and perhaps save you time by conducting a preliminary search.

Our head office is in Canberra and other offices are located in each State capital and Darwin. Contact numbers are listed on the back cover.

MINDING THE STORE

The Archives holds information sessions about archival work, including training in how to use the finding aids and tours of the repositories. These are offered through the State offices to family and local history societies, community organisations and university students.



LIGHTHOUSE AT DENT ISLAND OFF QUEENSLAND, 1915.

IN OUR VAST ISLAND CONTINENT, AVIATION, SHIPPING, LAND TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VITAL ISSUES AND THE ARCHIVES HOLDINGS COVER THESE TOPICS IN GREAT DETAIL.

National Archives

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